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A SUMERIAN TABLET RELATING TO THE FALL OF MAN

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In working out the texts published by H. F. Lutz in Vol. I, Part 2, of the University of Pennsylvania Series, my attention was attracted by No. 103. I obtained from the Museum authorities permission to collate the tablet, and was fortunate enough to succeed in bettering its reading in several places. The upper part of the obverse is only partially destroyed. The outer surface of the clay has peeled off, but one can still make out some of the signs from the deep impression of the stylus on the part remaining. The upper right-hand corner of the obverse is entirely destroyed, and so also is a portion of the right side. From the character of the writing, the document can be safely dated toward the end of the Isin and the beginning of the First Dynasty.

The tablet, in my opinion, is of extraordinary importance, and refers to the story of the fall of man. I have reached this conclusion from the following considerations:

1. It cannot be, as Lutz took it, a Sumerian Code of Laws. Its resemblance with that class of literature does not go beyond the occurrence of the word *tukun-bi* in l. 27.

2. It cannot be taken as a lamentation, liturgy, prayer or religious text of the same general kind. The expression used in ll. 6-7 may point that way, but the resemblance ends there.

3. It is not a hymn in honor of some god or deified king. This point needs to detain us a little longer, because our text bears some resemblance, in two or three lines, to another document, also published by Lutz in the same volume, which has reached us in two duplicates, Nos. 134 and 94.

It is a hymn by ^d*Ninni-dug*, the daughter of ^d*Enlil-á-maĝ*, in honor of the goddess ^d*Nin-tin-ùg-ga*, the one who "gives life to the dead."

^d*Enlil-á-maĝ*, it may be said in passing, is a new Cassite King. A business document dated in his reign has been prepared for publica-

tion by me, in a volume of Old Babylonian Contracts now ready for publication. The two texts have in common some words and expressions. With l. 5: *ní-ma-si ní-ma-si a-g[a-ta]*, cf. 134, l. 17; *a-rá*, of l. 14, occurs again in 134, 13; finally 134 mentions the *ki-in-gub nam-ti-la*, which is certainly identical with the *kin-gub* of our tablet. On the other hand, the differences between the two texts are very striking. Our document does not contain either the name of the god to whom it might be dedicated, or that of the person who dedicates it. The traces of the first line absolutely forbid reading the name of any god there.

Passing now from the negative to the positive side, we find that our text must be:

1. Mythical or legendary in character. This is shown by the use of the word *nam-lù-gál(lu)* in ll. 12, 13, 33; by the mention of the "food of god" to be eaten by special beings (l. 26); the use of the very special word *kin-gub*, meaning "garden" or "land"; finally, by the introduction of the *giš-gi-tùg-gi* and the *gi-úš-dù*, a tree and a plant that are characteristically legendary and, to the best of my knowledge, do not occur elsewhere in literature.

2. Our text is in the form of a discourse. This appears from the constant use of *má-e*, *za-e*, from the pronominal suffixes, from the changes in thought and from the verbal forms, especially the frequent use of the imperatives.

Unfortunately, throughout the whole tablet, no names are mentioned: from this omission we gather evidence to the fact that the story was so well known that no one would be likely to misunderstand it. It is not probable that the missing portion of the first lines of the obverse could have contained any name: if so, it would have been repeated. The story starts abruptly and ends abruptly; we have evidently only an episode excerpted from a much longer account.

However, I believe the text to contain the words of two speakers, and one of these to have been a god. He is addressed as such: in l. 12 the expression "thy humanity" points clearly to this, and so does the promise he makes of unheard-of prosperity. The other is certainly a man. Apart from other considerations, the words "men like thee" leave little doubt on this point.

There is no expression in our text which marks clearly where the words of the first speaker end and those of the second begin. This is to be regretted, but the context itself is a good guide. In my opinion, a man addresses a god from Obv. 1 to 12 inclusive. This is proven by the words "thy human race," in l. 11; the following line simply enlarges on the idea there expressed. The transition is clearly marked in l. 13 by the use of the imperative. From l. 13 to the end there seems to be no doubt that the speaker is a god.

Considering all these facts, and even if the damaged part of the obverse, which contains the man's speech, be left out of consideration, I believe that little doubt can exist as to the fact that the present document gives us the clearest and most complete account of the Sumerian story of the Fall of Man, as known to the priestly writers of Nippur. Taking the text as a whole, we note the following similarities to the biblical story:

1. The disobedience of man, clearly expressed in l. 4. Had not the verb in the first part of l. 4 been destroyed, we would probably have found a clear allusion to the tempter.
2. The fear and weeping subsequent to that disobedience, in ll. 5-7.
3. The calling by the god, and consequent flight, in ll. 8-11.
4. The mention of a tree called *giš-gi-túg-gi* "the tree which establishes (the use of) clothing." Note also the element *túg* in the name ^dTag-túg, the "gardener" who is the protagonist of the fall in Langdon's tablet.
5. The clearly expressed intention of the god that mankind be denied possession of the "reed which frees from death." If my interpretation of l. 25 is correct, we find there implied also the motive for this prohibition: "Thou shalt never reach unto me" which would represent the biblical idea, "Lest he become like one of us."
6. The very clear mention of a garden, where man used to work, and from which he is expelled (ll. 16-23).
7. God's command "to go, till the land and raise the food for sustenance" (l. 24).
8. The statement that all this has happened because "the hand of the sons of the menials has reached the food, and their eyes have been opened" (l. 27).

Truly, together with all these resemblances, we find facts which do not agree with the biblical narrative; no one would, however, expect the two accounts to be perfectly alike. The chief difference lies in the fact that, in the account of our text, the "fall" seems to be more that of a race than of an individual. At any rate, l. 17 presupposes the existence of a certain number of persons, living together in the garden and cultivating it for the gods. In l. 26 the same idea seems to be implied by the fact that other beings, together with their fathers and mothers, will take their places. In l. 27 a collective sin is also implied.

If this departs from the biblical account, it is perfectly in accord with Babylonian ideas. In the story of creation, as restored by the Ashur text, we find that mankind had been created for the express purpose of performing the service of the gods, and thus relieving the lower deities of such a task. "They (mankind) shall perform the service of the gods, these (the gods) shall be pacified" (cf. D. D. Luckenbill, *AJSL*, XXXVIII, 21).

In our story, just as in the Babylonian deluge story, the ethical motive seems to be absent. The taking of the forbidden food is regarded as a disobedient act, but one which leads to a higher and better life. In short, we do not have a "fall," but a "step upward." If mankind is chased away from the garden, it is not because they have sinned, but because the gods did not intend to permit them to take the second step, eat of the plant of life and become absolutely like them. Enkidu's abandon of his primitive life is regarded as a distinct advance; he has entered into real life.

It is only by keeping this in mind that we can explain the blessing which closes our account. Mankind has forfeited eternal life. However, by disobedience, they have approached a higher status, which brings them nearer to that of the gods. They will not live forever, they will be subject to diseases, but they will not at least lack the necessities of life.

This also explains why Tag-tug, the Sumerian protagonist of the Fall, has found place in the pantheon among the minor gods. The rapprochement of Tag-tug with Ziu-suddu, which Langdon tries to make, it seems to me must be abandoned. In the first place, I believe that Professor Jastrow was perfectly right in denying that

Langdon's tablet contains any allusion to the flood (cf. Jastrow, *Sumerian Myths of Beginnings*, in *AJSL*, XXXII, 102 ff.). Secondly, Scheil has shown that the element *túg*, in Tag-tug's name, does not mean "náhu," but refers to clothing (cf. Langdon, *Le Poème Sumerien*, p. 152 f.). Lastly, Tag-tug is not a man but a woman. This is proven in the first place by the epithet *sal-li-numun* "the fruitful woman" which follows the name of Tag-tug in Langdon's epic (*AJSL*, XXXII, 129, and n. 3). Further evidence of this is found in two lists published by Schroeder (*Keilschrifttexte Verschiedenen Inhalts*, III, Nos. 63, 65) where Tag-tug is called "the daughter of Anu."

Once denying the connection between Tag-tug and Ziu-suddu, we are confronted with the question: For what reason has the protagonist of the fall been deified? That such was the case cannot in any way be doubted. I have found her name, preceded by the determinative, in a list of gods in the Nippur collection (CBS 11889, Rev. Col. V), where she is placed toward the end of the list, being preceded by the gods ^d*gud*, ^d*VI-bi* (sic!), ^d*áš-rá-tum*, ^d*LUGAL-ŠEŠŠIG-lal* and is followed by ^d*ne-gun* and two other gods, whose names are only partially preserved. The deification of Tag-tug proves that, after all, her "sin" was not considered so disgraceful and that, in consequence of it, her own status has been raised, not lowered.

Coming back to our text, the real punishment of the culprit and of her kin seems to have been the loss of perfect health. The somewhat ambiguous line in Langdon's tablet: "The face of life, until he dies, he shall not see" means, as Langdon correctly interpreted it, that mankind shall not be free from disease. The word *balātu* signifies good health, by the side of life. In this sense only can we explain the wish expressed in the opening sentences of old Babylonian letters: *li-bal-li-tu-ka* "may he (the god) grant thee health." The curse, as expressed in our text, would come to mean the same thing: "In no way whatever, after this, thou shalt reach release (from diseases)." The word *KA-du* = *iṭteru* comes from the verb *paṭāru* which is the one constantly used for "loosening a ban," "freeing from an evil influence" and the like. Disease, as we all know, was directly due to the evil influence of malignant demons.

The same idea is expressed in the biblical story, where the punishment of Eve consists in physical suffering. Adam's punishment, as

Adam's rôle in general, is entirely secondary. The command to work is not a punishment: in the Babylonian story it is clearly stated that humanity was already working. In the biblical account Adam's punishment may simply be that work will no more be entirely pleasant, but will be attended by fatigue and physical pain. The loss of eternal life is not a part of the punishment. From both accounts we gather the idea that the god never intended man to be immortal. If mankind is expelled from the garden, it is simply because the gods wanted to see to it that a further disobedience might not further frustrate their original plans.

Coming now to a closer study of the document, it is needless for me to say that I do not regard my translation of such a difficult text as final. I trust, however, that, whatever betterments may be offered by scholars, the main points of my interpretation will remain unshaken.

TRANSLITERATION

1. *ú ?-gar-dim*
2. *KA NU E KA*
3. *. NE- . . . -gi-NE*
- 4a. *im-ag-dè lul-ta mi-ni-in-*
- 4b. *nu-mu-e-ši-še-[ga ?]*
5. *šà ?-mu ní-ma-si ní-ma-si a-g[a-ta ?]*
6. *ġar ?-ta-[ám ?] -mu e-da-šub*
7. *ní-zu ? SAG-PA-RIN e-da-šub*
8. *nam ?-šub ġù-dé-dé-zu-a-ta*
9. *ù má ?-e ġù-dé-zu-a-ta*
10. *sag-mu-é-ta rá-a-dš*
11. *ù má-e sag-mu-e-ta a-*
12. *nam-lù-ġâl-zu kuš-zu nu-ub-da-dù šà-[ġig ?] ba-ab-tum*
13. *nam-lù-ġâl-lu-dè inim-inim ġiš-ku-geštu nu-mu-*
14. *SAG-PA-RIN-zu ib-til-e*
15. *šà-mu edin-na-ám du-ù-u[n ?]*
- 16a. *má-e al-me-en-na-ta (ġiš)-ġi-túg-ġi il-il-[dè ?]*
- 16b. *kin-ġi-a-áš ba-ra-ne-ġi*
- 17a. *ġi-úš-dù TUR-TUR-lá lù-tur-tur-ra-ġè-ne*
- 17b. *[nu-il ?]-il-i-ne-a*

REVERSE

18. *za-e al-me-en-na-ta nu-mu-e-il*
 19. *a-rá na-me-me-ka egir-bi-da KA-du ù-ba-ra-ra-[dug ?]*
 20. *gud-mu-šù uš-ù-dè kin-gí-a-áš ba-ra-ne-gí*
 21. *a-šà-mu-šù engar-ru-dè kin-gí-a-áš ba-ra-ne-gí*
 22. *a-šà-mu-šù al-ag-dè kin-gí-a-áš ba-ra-ne-gí*
 23. *kin-gub ag-dè kin-gí-a-áš ba-ra-áš-ne-gí*
 24. *gin-na kin-gub ù-mu-ag ninda-kù ù-mu-ub*
 25. *má-e al-me-en-na-ta ba-ra-ra-dug*
 26a. *lù-za-e-dìm kin-gub ù-mu-ag ama-ne-ne ù ad-da-ne-ne*
 26b. *ninda an-ni ib-kú-u-ne*
 27. *tukun-bi ninda šú dumu gí-me-a-áš mu-ne-dug igi bī-ib-dù šag ?-*

 28. *e-ne-ne-dìm 10-še-gur-ta-ám sag-gá i-ni-in-si-gi*
 29a. *TUR-TUR-lá lù-šag ad-da-ne-ne-ka 10-še-gur-ta-ám*
 29b. *sag-gá i-ni-in-si-gi-eš-a*
 30. *lù ad-da-ne-ne še bī-ib-dāḡ-e-ne-a*
 31. *še í sig udu mu-ni-in-túm-má-a*
 32. *dirig-zu-šù lù-gāl me-e[n]*

TRANSLATION

1. Like vegetable food(?)
 2.
 3.
 4a. To do that, with malice he has
 4b. I have not been obedient to thee.
 5. My heart(?) is full of fear, is full of fear, after that.
 6. has been cast,
 7. Fear, weeping has been cast
 8. At the sending of thy call.
 9. And I, at thy call,
 10. From my appearance I was fleeing.
 11. And I, from my appearance,
 12. Thy humanity, thy body, has not been freed,
 13. For humanity the words of understanding are not
 14. Finish thy weeping!
 15. From my place, go into the desert!

- 16a. To me, forever, for taking the "tree which establishes (the use of) clothing,"
 16b. As an outcast, thou shalt not return!
 17. "The reed which frees from death" inferior beings (lit.: the low ones among those who are small) shall not take!

REVERSE

18. Thou never shalt take!
 19. In no way whatever, after this, thou shalt reach release (from diseases).
 20. To my ox, for leading it, as an outcast, thou shalt not return!
 21. To my field, for irrigating it, as an outcast, thou shalt not return!
 22. To my field, for tilling it, as an outcast, thou shalt not return!
 23. To my garden, for tilling it, as an outcast, thou shalt not return!
 24. Go, till the garden, raise the food for eating!
 25. Thou never shalt reach me!
 26a. Men like thee will till the garden, their mothers and their fathers
 26b. , shall eat of the food of god.
 27. Since the hand of the sons of the menials has reached the food, their eyes have been opened,
 28. Just as for them, ten measures of barley each one of them has heaped up.
 29. Each of the servants of the chief among their fathers, ten measures of barley they have heaped up.
 30. To each of their fathers barley has been multiplied.
 31. Barley, oil, wool, sheep have been brought in unto them!
 32. Humanity, thou art to know abundance!

ANNOTATIONS

L. 4. No sign is missing before *nu-mu-e-ši-še-ga*. The verbs could also be read in the third person singular. The infix *e-ši* signifies "toward thee" (A. Poebel, *Gramm. Texts*, p. 107).

L. 5. The first sign is partially destroyed. The sign *ma*, in the first occurrence of *ní-ma-si*, is doubtful; in the second, read *ma* instead of *da*. The traces of the last sign are not those of *am* or *qar*. probably *ga*.

With this line cf. Lutz, No. 134, ll. 14-15: *lù-li-tar-ri la-ba-an-tuku nì-ma-si nì-ma-si a-ga-ta zi al-zi-ir-ir-ri* "There is no one to look after (me): I am afraid, I am afraid for this; I am in trouble."

L. 6. The first sign is partially destroyed. *Ĝar* would give the meaning *ešêru*, *ušurtu* "curse, ban"; *ĝar-ta* could also mean "*ina kīam* "therein, therefrom" (*Gramm. Texts*, p. 40). In the word *e-da-šub* the infix *da* is equal to "with it" (*ibid.*, p. 72).

L. 7. Second sign is not *igi*. Very probably *zu*. *SAG-PA-RIN* = *nissatu* "lamentation, grief, weeping."

L. 8. Restoration of *nam-šub* very probable.

L. 10. First sign is *sag*, meaning *zimu* "outward appearance, countenance, face." *Rá-a-áš* is a participle; for *áš* after participles cf. Del., *Sum. Gramm.*, p. 79.

L. 12. *Kuš-zu* seems to be in apposition to *nam-lù-gál-zu*. The sign *dù* = *pašâru* "to free from an evil influence" is the same which is used in l. 19 in the word *KA-du* = *ipšêru*. The sign after *ša* is not *mu*: the traces could bear out the restoration *ša-gál* or *ša-gig*. The word *ba-ab-du* is found written on the edge, after the break. The restoration *ša-gig* is uncertain: if accepted, the rest of the line would mean "disease it has brought."

L. 13. *Giš-ku-geštu* is the right word for "knowledge, understanding." The missing verb might have signified "are not adapted, are not beneficial to."

L. 14. *Îb-til-e* is an imperative.

L. 15. I have taken *ša* in the sense of from, as it is used constantly in Sumerian accounts before the names of places. *Ša-mu* might of course also mean "my heart" or "within me."

L. 16. *Al-me-en-na-ta* (cf. also ll. 18 and 25). For interpretation of this expression cf. Poebel, *Gramm. Texts*, p. 38, ll. 19-26, and especially *me-na-ta* = *iš-tu ma-ti*, *me-na-šù* = *a-na ma-ti*. Thus we might translate "since this time." However, the recurring expression *za-e al-me-en-na-ta* in a Nippur text published by Langdon (*PBS*, Vol. X, Part 4, No. 5, Obv. 1 ff.) makes the meaning "forever" more probable.

Giš-gi-túg-gi is the name of one of the two legendary trees of the garden. Etymologically, it means "the tree which established (*gi* = *kānu*) clothing." This brings into more prominent light the story

of the fig tree out of the leaves of which the first wearing apparel was made. Moreover, the sense of modesty and use of clothing would tend to add evidence to the fact that in the Babylonian account, as it was the case in the biblical story, the protagonist of the fall was a woman.

Îl-îl-[dè]. The line has been restored in analogy with 20-23, which end in the same way. *Îl*=*našû*, and means either to raise or to take away.

Kin-gî-a-dš. I have chosen for this expression the common meaning "to send, to order," or "to be sent, to be ordered." It might be possible to interpret this as the name of a place, taking *dš* for *šû*=*ana*. This interpretation, however, would not suit very well the context in ll. 20-23.

L. 17. *Gi-úš-dù*. "The reed which frees the dead" or "loosens death." This would appear to be a very good name for the tree of life.

TUR-TUR-lá, written also *TUR-TUR-la* (Génouillac, *Dréhem*, 5320; Legrain, *Les Temps*, 378, 4-6) or *lù-TUR-TUR-la-ne* (A. de la Fuye, *Doc. Présargoniques*, 117, XVIII; 119, XII; Gén., *TSA*, 18, Rev. VI; 22, Obv. II, etc.). It is a general name for persons who had a very low station in life. The verb *TUR-TUR-lá* means "to make small," "to diminish." Thus *TUR-TUR-lá lù-tur-tur-ra-gè-ne* signifies "the small among the small." The expression is paralleled by *dumu gî-me-a-dš* "the sons of the servants" of l. 27.

The restoration [*nu-îl*]-*îl-i-ne-a* seems to be required by the context. Cf. following line. Omitting the negative particle, we might read [*îl*]-*îl-i-dè-a* "for raising" as in line preceding.

L. 19. *A-rá*=*alaktu* "way, progress of time." *A-rá na-me*, followed by negation, "In no way whatever, in no possible way." *KA-du*=*ipteru* "release, loosening" (from an evil influence). *Û-ba-ra-ra-[dug]*. Second sign is certainly *ba*, fourth very probably *ra*. The sign *dug* has been restored from line 25, where sign preceding *dug* is also very probably *ra*. I have chosen for the sign *dug* the value *kašâdu* (as in *sâ-dug*). Cf. also *du*=*alâku*. The sign *dug* must have also the significance "to make" (cf. Del., *Sum. Gramm.*, p. 70, note).

L. 20. *Uš*=*ridû ša alpi*.

L. 21. *Ag*=*rapaku*. Cf. also Schorr, *Rechtsurkunden*, 134, 9.

L. 23. *Kin-gub*. Certainly the name of a place apt for cultivation, as clearly shown in l. 23. We can translate it either "garden or field," but we must keep in mind that this is a special name, with peculiar religious significance. Etymologically, it simply means "the place where one stays": *ki(n) = iršitu* or *kaḫkaru*. However, our *kin-gub* is certainly identical with the *ki-in-gub nam-ti-la-gè* of text 134, obv. 20. There the princess ^d*Ninni-dug*, addressing the goddess *Nin-tin-ùg-ga* "the one who gives life to the dead," expresses this wish: "Upon the *kingub* of life may I set my foot!" The *ki-in-gub nam-ti-la-gè* is also certainly identical with the *ki nam-ti-la-gè* which occurs in one of Ebeling's texts (*Keischrifttexte*, Vol. I, No. 31, Obv. 19): *ki nam-ti-la-gè á-mu-ta ba-ab-gub-bu-uš = i-na kaḫ-ḫar ba-lá-ṭi i-da-a-a i-za-az-zu*. The fact that in this case the placing of the hands is mentioned may make us think of a sacred object, probably a reproduction of the field in question. In a list of metal objects, I have found the *urudu-ki-en-gub*, immediately after the *urudu-ki-lugal-gub* and *urudu-ki-gal*. In old Babylonian times metal reproductions of the *amaš-iš-tár* were also made. In any case, the *ki(n)-gub* of life was well distinguished from the *ki(n)-gub* of death. *Ki(n)-gub = kebêru* "grave." The *ki nam-úš* (sign BAT) = *kaḫkar muti* (Del., *Sum. Gl.*, p. 58). The *ki-úš* is the cemetery.

We thus find that there was a special "garden" or "field" which had long remained associated in the minds of men with the "abode of life." This would become perfectly intelligible on the hypothesis that *kin-gub* was the name of the garden harboring the tree of life.

In l. 24 we cannot keep the same meaning for the word, and its general use for "field or ground" is somewhat puzzling. The line presents no special difficulties, so there is little danger of the difficulty arising out of a mistranslation. If man, immediately after being told that he will not be permitted to return to till the "*kin-gub*," is commanded to go, and till the "*kin-gub*," the only way out of the apparent contradiction is to interpret there the word "*kin-gub*" in a more general sense. In the Fifth tablet of the Series "Evil Spirits" we find: *dumu ki-in-gub tu?-ud-da-a-meš* translated: *marê al-ti iršitim šunu*. Here *kin-gub* appears to have the general meaning of "earth." Cf. *ki-en-gi = ki-in-gi* "Shumer," and *ki-in-gi = mâtu*, in a general way. Notice that in this line, instead of *ba-ra-ne-gi*,

we have *ba-ra-áš-ne-gí*. The *áš* stands for *šù* "toward," and reinforces the idea expressed by the verb.

L. 24. The three verbs are certainly in the imperative. *Ub* = *na'adu*, but cf. also *ub* = *têlu*, *têltu* (from *elû*).

L. 25. Alternate reading: "Thou shalt never speak unto me."

L. 26. *Lù za-e-dim* "Men like thee" or "Others like thee." The thought appears to be that another race of beings will be placed in charge on the "garden," since mankind has so signally failed. The verb *ù-mu-ag* cannot be here translated as imperative. Shall we read *ib-kù-ù-dè* and suppose that some signs are missing after *ad-da-ne-ne*?

L. 27. *Tukun-di*. Literally: "At the moment when." The word generally introduces conditional sentences. Instead of *ninda šú* we might read *níg-šú* "the treasured possession," but the verb *mu-ne-dug* is either first or third person singular.

Gí-me-a-áš = *kinatu* (Br. 6342) "Servants, menials." An even stronger expression than *TUR-TUR-lá lù-tur-tur-ra-gè-ne* of l. 17. The sign after *GAB* is uncertain: possibly *šag*.

L. 28. *E-ne-ne-dim* "Like them," i.e., like the persons who will succeed humanity in the care of the garden. *Sag-gá i-ni-in-si-gi-eš-a: si-gi* = *šapaku* "to heap up." Cf. Br. 3408 and especially Muss-Arnolt, *HWB*, p. 108, bottom.

L. 31. The words *še í síg* are used with the general meaning of "life sustenance," i.e., all the things which are necessary for life. The addition of *udu* "sheep" gives greater importance to the promise.